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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. UK: CALLAGHAN LEADS THE PACK

FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN IS GENERALLY REGARDED AS THE FRONTRUNNER FOR LEADERSHIP OF THE LABOR PARTY WITH CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER HEALEY PROBABLY SECOND AT THIS POINT, ALTHOUGH HEALEY'S BRUTAL PARLIAMENTARY PERFORMANCE LAST WEEK AND OPPOSITION FROM THE PARTY'S LEFT WING LESSEN HIS CHANCES. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY LONDON:

--JENKINS IS RUNNING CLOSE TO HEALEY, WHILE FOOT, BENN, CROSLAND, AND MRS. WILLIAMS ARE ALSO EXPECTED TO STAND.

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--THE PARLIAMENTARY LABOR PARTY MET LATE MARCH 16 TO DETERMINE THE RULES FOR NAMING WILSON'S REPLACEMENT, AND THE LIAISON COMMITTEE IS EXPECTED TO COMPRESS THE WHOLE PROCESS INTO A MAXIMUM OF THREE WEEKS. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) LONDON 4122, 3/16.)

2. LEBANESE CRISIS: SCENE SHIFTS TO DAMASCUS

EMBASSY BEIRUT REPORTS THAT WHILE THE SECURITY SITUATION REMAINS BAD, VARIOUS LEBANESE MUSLIM AND PALESTINIAN LEADERS HAVE GONE TO DAMASCUS TO TALK WITH SYRIAN OFFICIALS. A NUMBER OF SUGGESTIONS TO BREAK THE FRANGIE DEADLOCK ARE IN THE AIR:

--A FORMULA ATTRIBUTED TO THE SYRIANS WOULD HAVE FRANGIE NAME EITHER GENERAL HANNA SAID OR FORMER SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT MEOUCHY (BOTH MARONITE) AS PREMIER, WHEREUPON FRANGIE WOULD RESIGN.

--RAYMOND EDDE HAS SUGGESTED THAT FRANGIE RESIGN WITH THE EFFECTIVE DATE CONTINGENT UPON ELECTION OF A SUCCESSOR, WHILE JUMBLATT (IN A STATEMENT GENERALLY CRITICAL OF SYRIAN INTERVENTION) DECLARED THAT THE PARLIAMENT SHOULD CONSIDER THE PRESIDENT AS HAVING ALREADY RESIGNED.

MEANWHILE, A SYRIAN MFA OFFICIAL TOLD EMBASSY DAMASCUS THAT SYRIA IS STIFFENING FRANGIE'S REFUSAL TO RESIGN SO THAT ALL PARTIES WILL BE OBLIGED TO FALL BACK ON SYRIAN MEDIATION. THE EMBASSY WAS INFORMED BY AN EGYPTIAN EMBASSY OFFICIAL THAT ASAD'S OFFICE HAD PREPARED A STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR AHDAB BUT SHELVED IT MARCH 13, WHEN IT APPEARED FRANGIE WOULD RECEIVE PUBLIC SUPPORT FROM CHAMOUN AND GEMAYEL. (UNCLASSIFIED) BEIRUT 2349 AND (CONFIDENTIAL) DAMASCUS 1520, 3/16.)

3. MOZAMBIQUE: CHISSANO ADDRESSES SECURITY COUNCIL

THE SECURITY COUNCIL MET MARCH 16 AND HEARD A MEASURED, DIGNIFIED STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER CHISSANO, WHO ESTIMATED

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ED HIS COUNTRY'S ADDITIONAL NEEDS (AS A RESULT OF THE EMBARGO ON RHODESIAN GOODS) TO BE AT LEAST \$49 MILLION ANNUALLY. ACCORDING TO USUN, JAMAICAN FOREIGN MINISTER THOMPSON FOLLOWED WITH A THREATENING AND HEAVILY POLITICAL SPEECH, INCLUDING REFERENCES TO THE BYRD AMENDMENT (WHICH CHISSANO CHOSE NOT TO MENTION). (CONFIDENTIAL) USUN 1038, 3/16.)

4. THE TANGLED FUTURE OF PERONISM

SINCE THE MARCH 6 CONGRESS, MRS. PERON HAS ENJOYED FULL CONTROL OF HER PARTY'S ORGANIZATION, BUT SIMULTANEOUSLY HAS LOST ABOUT TWO THIRDS OF THE MEMBERSHIP EMBRACED BY THE PARTY AT THE TIME OF HER LATE HUSBAND'S RETURN IN 1973.

--APPROXIMATELY HALF OF THE DESERTERS MAKE UP THE VARIOUS FACTIONS KNOWN COLLECTIVELY AS THE ANTI-VERTICALISTAS, ALL OF WHOM FAVOR MRS. PERON'S DEPARTURE.

--MRS. PERON HAS LOST THE SUPPORT OF LABOR, AND MANY UNION LEADERS HAVE ALREADY MADE THEIR PEACE WITH THE MILITARY.

--PERONISM, HOWEVER, IS NOT LIKELY TO DIE, SINCE ONE OF THE FACTIONS WILL PROBABLY SURVIVE TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE FUTURE. (CONFIDENTIAL) BUENOS AIRES 1722, 3/16.)

5. SPAIN: POSSIBLE CABINET CHANGES?

RUMORS CIRCULATING IN MADRID INDICATE THAT FINANCE MINISTER VILLAR MIR AND POSSIBLY PRIME MINISTER ARIAS WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE CABINET, BUT THE EMBASSY DOUBTS THAT ARIAS WILL BE LEAVING SOON BECAUSE:

--IF HE WERE, THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THE COUNCIL OF THE REALM WOULD PRESENT TO THE KING A REPLACEMENT CAPABLE OF ENERGIZING THE REFORM PROCESS.

--THE CABINET (ALBEIT WITH DELAYS) HAS FORMULATED REFORM PROPOSALS, AND THE CORTES (A GREATER OBSTACLE TO

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CHANGE) HAS TAKEN STEPS TO NAME NEW COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN MORE ATTUNED TO NEW LEGISLATION.

EMBASSY COMMENT: THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT THE FINANCE MINISTER WILL GO, BUT HIS FATE NOW RESTS WITH THE PASSAGE OF HIS ECONOMIC REFORM PACKAGE IN THE CORTES, WHERE IT IS EXPERIENCING TROUBLE. ALTHOUGH A POPULAR MOVE, HIS REMOVAL MIGHT NOT HELP THE ECONOMIC SITUATION. (CONFIDENTIAL) MADRID 205, 3/16.)

6. PLOTTING AND PARANOIA IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA

FROM HIS VANTAGE POINT IN YAOUNDE, AMBASSADOR SPIRO COMMENTS ON THE INTRIGUE AND PARANOIA WHICH SURROUNDED THE DECLARATION BY EQUATORIAL GUINEA THAT HE AND CONSUL

MITHOEFER WERE PERSONAE NON GRATAE. BASED ON TALKS WITH FRENCH AND SPANISH DIPLOMATS, THE AMBASSADOR REPORTS THAT:

--THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL MAY HAVE CONCOCTED THE LETTER AGAINST HIM AND MITHOEFER WITHOUT CONSULTING PRESIDENT MACIAS.

--THE PRESIDENT SPENT THE NIGHT OF MARCH 8 DRIVING THROUGH BATA, STOPPING EVERY 100 YARDS TO BEAT UP MILITIA GUARDS WHILE ACCUSING THEM OF TREASON.

--ON MARCH 9 TEN MEMBERS OF THE CABINET WERE PLACED UNDER ARMED GUARD AS SUSPECTS IN AN ATTEMPTED COUP.

AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL, PERHAPS IN CONCERT WITH OTHERS, MAY HAVE SET UP THIS WHOLE FIASCO IN ORDER TO DISCREDIT THE US REPRESENTATIVE, AND THE ABORTIVE "COUP" MAY BE BLAMED ON ME AND THE CIA.
(CONFIDENTIAL) YAOUNDE 999, 3/16.) KISSINGER

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